

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CANBER 01610 010703Z

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ACTION IO-11

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7617

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1610

STATE FOR AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ILO, AORG, CA

SUBJ: TRAVEL OF AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN, SPECIAL ENVOY ON ILO  
AFFAIRS

1. GOA HAS GIVEN US AIDE MEMOIRE CONTAINING AUSTRALIAN POSITION ON ILO FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN'S MEETING WITH FONMIN PEACOCK AND LABMIN STREE ON FEBRUARY 19.

BEGIN TEXT:

2. QTE. 1. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THERE WAS NO PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS PRIOR TO THE US DECISION TO GIVE NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL.

3. QTE. 2. WE WOULD WANT TO SEE THE UNITED STATES REMAIN WITHIN THE ILO, AND ARE GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE DELETERIOUS CONSEQUENCES WHICH WE BELIEVE WOULD FOLLOW IF THE UNITED STATES WERE TO WITHDRAW. WE SEE THIS AFFECTING THE POSITION, NOT SIMPLY ON THE GOVERNMENTS' SIDE, BUT ALSO WITHIN THE EMPLOYER AND WORKER RANKS AS WELL. WE RECOGNIZE THE UNITED STATES' UNDERLYING DESIRE TO REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE ILO AND WELCOME MR. SILBERMAN'S STATEMENT THAT, DURING THE NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL PERIOD, THERE IS NO  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 CANBER 01610 010703Z

INTENTION OF THE UNITED STATES' NOT PAYING ITS CONTRI-

BUTION FOR THE BALANCE OF 1975 ONWARDS ON A REGULAR BASIS.

4. QTE. 3. AS TO THE GENERAL POINTS WHICH MR. SILBERMAN PUT AS A BASIS FOR THE UNITED STATES MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP OF THE ILO:

(A) WE UNDERSTAND THE UNITED STATES' BASIC ATTITUDES AND OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE ILO, AND THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO THOSE OBJECTIVES. WE ARE EQUALLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE DISTINCTION WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAKES BETWEEN THE ILO - A PRESUMPTION OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION - AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, NOTABLY THE UNITED NATIONS. AT THE SEAME TIME WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT THE ILO HAS BEEN AMONG THE MOST RESPONSIBLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

(B) AS TO THE UNITED STATES' POSITION ON MAJOR ELECTIVE OFFICES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION, MR. SILBERMAN STRESSED THAT THE UNITES STATES IS OPPOSED TO THE ELECTION OF A CANDIDATE WHO IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AN EASTERN EUROPEAN OR OTHER COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT THIS OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE WOULD EXTEND TO A REPRESENTATIVE OF A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD POSITIVELY SUPPRESSED, OR WAS IDEOLOGICALLY OPPOSED TO, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, WHETHER OF WORKERS OR EMPLOYERS. MR. SILBERMAN INSTANCED THE OFFICES OF PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL AND OF THE MARITIME SESSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE AND OF THE WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNING BODY AS OFFICES TO WHICH THESE OBJECTIONS APPLIED IN 1976. IT IS AUSTRALIA,S POLICY IN THE ILO, AS IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, TO SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLE OF REGIONAL ROTATION OF OFFICES AND TO SUPPORT THE AGREED NOMINEES OF REGIONAL GROUPS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGIONAL ROTATION THE EUROPEAN GROUP IS TO PROVIDE THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNING BODY THIS YEAR. HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CANBER 01610 010703Z

WE ARE SURE THAT THE WESTERN EUROPEANS WILL TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE UNITED STATES'S POSITION WHEN CONSIDERING THEIR GROUP NOMINATIONS.

(C) QTE WE ARE IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF MAINTAINING THE PRESENT PROVISIONS REGARDING STATES OF CHIEF INDUSTRIAL IMPORTANCE, BOTH IN RELATION TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP OF THE GOVERNING

BODY AND TO THE POSITION OF THESE STATES IN  
REGARD TO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

(D) QTE. IN PRINCIPLE WE DO NOT DISAGREE WITH THE PRO-  
POSAL TO AMEND THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE CON-  
FERENCE TO PRECLUDE THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLU-  
TION CONDEMNING A MEMBER STATE WITHOUT THERE  
HAVING BEEN A PROPER EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUES  
INVOLVED, AND THEN ONLY IN RELATION TO MATTERS  
AFFECTING THE ILO. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, POINT  
OUT THAT THIS PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE PRECLUDED THE  
SPONTANEOUS CONDEMNATION AT THE 1956 CONFERENCE  
OF THE SUPPRESSION OF THE HUNGARIAN UPRISING,  
AND THAT BECAUSE OF THIS CONSIDERATION THE EMPLOYERS  
AND WORKERS MAY BE UNWILLING TO FOREGO FREEDOM OF  
ACTION IN SUCH EXCEPTIONAL CASES. WE WOULD OF COURSE  
WANT TO LOOK IN DETAIL AT ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSAL TO  
AMEND THE STANDING ORDERS.

(E) QTE. WE WOULD ALSO AGREE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING  
THE POLITICISATION OF THE ILO, BUT THE REAL PROBLEM  
SEEMS TO BE RATHER ONE OF MECHANICS TO ACHIEVE THIS  
OBJECTIVE

CANBERRA: 27 FEBRUARY 1976. END QTE END TEXT

5. COMMENT: POLCOUNS DISCUSSED AIDE MEMOIRE WITH DFA  
FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
ROGERS. ROGERS SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DIFFICULTY  
WORKING OUT AN AGREED TEXT. HOWEVER, HE FELT THE US  
SHOULD BE QUITE SATISFIED WITH AUSTRALIA'S POSITION.

6. GOA BELIEVES THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT  
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PAGE 04 CANBER 01610 010703Z

THE US STAY IN THE ILO, OTHERWISE THE ORGANIZATION WILL  
FADE AWAY. EXPANDING ON THE AIDE MEMOIRE, ROGERS RE-  
EMPHASIZED THE GOA'S POLICY OF SUPPORTING THE PRINCIPLE  
OF REGIONAL ROTATION OF OFFICES. OTHERWISE AUSTRALIANS  
WOULD NEVER OBTAIN ANY INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS. HOW-  
EVER, GOA DID NOT BELIEVE THAT PROBLEM OF VOTING FOR  
AN EAST EUROPEAN OR COMMUNIST CANDIDATE FOR MAJOR ILO  
OFFICES WOULD ARISE THIS YEAR BECAUSE WESTERN EUROPEANS  
WOULD BLOCK THEIR NOMINATIONS.

7. ROGERS NOTED THAT PARAGRAPH (E) OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE  
WAS SOMEWHAT CONFUSING. IT SHOULD BE INTERPRETED TO  
READ THAT THE GOA AGREES THAT THE ILO IS NOT WORKING  
WELL AND THAT GOA IS PREPARED TO WORK WITH US TO MAKE  
IT FUNCTION BETTER. END COMMENT

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